Cents and sensibility

Large tuition increase will damage students, schools

The news from the House-Senate budget committee for the Georgia General Assembly that a significant tuition increase is on the table puts students, the Institute and the entire University System in jeopardy. The current reasonable cost of tuition allows Tech to be competitive in retaining top young minds in the state of Georgia and brings in the best from across the nation, allowing the Institute to continue to soar even in times of economic hardship.

The most disturbing aspects coming out of the meeting are the calls by some to continue to soar even in times of economic hardship. Providing affordable, quality higher education to the people of Georgia should be a source of pride for the state, and the people the assembly represents.

People should earn admission to the state’s public schools based on their academic merits, not the financial fortunes of their parents. Properly educating future engineers, teachers and civic leaders ensures the strength of the state and the nation as a whole. Higher education is no longer a luxury for the elite; it is a necessity for next generation to succeed.

The need of the legislator to balance the budget is not forgotten and a reasonable tuition increase may be needed, but it must be done sensibly and with regard to future generations. Unfortunately, because of the change in times, the majority of current legislators cannot fathom the burden they could potentially be dumping on students.

The Consensus Opinion reflects the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of the Technique, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.

EDITORIAL CARTOON BY MAGGIE SMITH

Your views

Campus MovieFest remains casual

I would like to respond to last week’s letter criticizing the quality of some entries in this year’s Campus MovieFest (“Campus MovieFest losing touch,” Feb. 19). I was interested in entering the event this year, but in the end could not submit a film that needed to form a team and make a quality film. But I do take issue with a couple criticisms of the event.

The letter seemed to insinuate that the use of higher quality video production equipment was creating an unfair advantage. As someone with over four years of video production experience, I would first like to point out that the best equipment does not necessarily make the best film. The technical quality of a film may be higher, but that does not mean that the script, story, or cinematography, or editing is also of a higher quality.

Additionally, access to more professional equipment does not mean that students know how to operate them. I know plenty of people at Tech who can use a camcorder, but not as many as would know how to, say, open up a Panasonic HVX200 by two f-stops. Plus, the actual composition of a shot depends nothing on the camera used to capture it. In the end, a film is made by filmmakers, not by equipment.

Also, in student film competitions know what they are looking for in a film, and can easily see past the visual and audio quality to judge films based on cinematography, directing, acting, and plot. I would expect the judging body of Campus MovieFest to be no exception.

Finally, it is unfair to penalize students just because they have dealt with filmmaking before. After all, their primary purpose at Tech is getting a degree, not making movies. There are a plethora of serious independent film competitions out there for aspiring filmmakers, but I would not quite rank CMF as one of them. Those competitions involve professionals who make a living in film and video production, use professional equipment, and often include budgets reaching into the hundreds of dollars. CMF is a casual competition for full time college students looking to have fun and make a quick film in a week. I don’t see how it could be more amateur than that.

Chris Rodesney
Second-year PHYS

Currents strategies will not solve energy problems

I support transitioning to clean energy and eliminating our dependence on fossil fuels. Not only will clean energy improve our economy through job creation and reduced energy costs for more efficient buildings, but it will also reduce pollution that causes illness, death, climate change and ecosystems devastation. Unfortunately, D.C.’s definition of clean energy includes offshore drilling, “clean” coal and nuclear power. Non-renewable energy sources put our environment, economy and health at risk.

Offshore oil wells spill thousands of barrels of oil, fuel and chemicals into federal waters. How can we allow an increase in these “routine” releases, no less the threat of massive oil spills, impact coastal ecosystems? There is no reason to risk our water for oil that, by Department of Energy estimates, would only meet U.S. demand for about two years!

Politicians on both sides of the aisle are calling for billions to develop “clean” coal technologies. Coal will never be clean or renewable. So-called “clean” coal technologies are expensive, inefficient and unproven. Considering the harm to Appalachian communities caused by mountaintop removal coal mining and resulting pollution, a coal-powered future looks messy, dirty: toxic materials, including mercury and radioactive waste, will continue to be pumped into our environment.

Nuclear power is a foolish investment. Rocky Mountain Institute estimates that investments in efficiency could save seven times as much energy as equal investments in nuclear plants produce, while creating 10 times as many permanent jobs. President Obama recently announced the release of $8.3 billion in loan guarantees to finance the first new nuclear reactors in the United States in nearly 30 years. Georgia’s Plant Vogtle will be the first to receive funds. This site was intended for four reactors estimated at $600 million total, but only two reactors cost $9 billion. Since nuclear plants are risky investments, the only way utilities can pay construction costs is to pass them on to taxpayers and ratepayers.

Our future depends on implementing truly clean and renewable sources, like solar, geothermal and geothermal energy. Otherwise we are just paying to poison ourselves, and our children.

Carlly Queen
Alumna ’09 ME
Common-sense rules for getting around

Olympics offer unique moral perspective

I’m not a huge fan of winter in general. Having lived in the South for most of my life, I don’t have much of an appreciation for cold weather. However, there are a couple of things that are cool about this winter so far. This winter gave us a snow day, which is a rarity at Tech. The other thing that’s going on this winter is the huge event that everyone has been talking about: the Winter Olympics hosted by Vancouver for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. And paradoxically, as the Olympic games are usually pretty awesome, in my opinion.

The Olympics gives us a chance to watch bizarre sports that we only get to see once every four years. It is also in a person’s best interest to want to know, live. It is also in a person’s best interest to want to know, live. I mean, because whatever happened to the ones who do not know the meaning of a four-way stop sign. It is like a line that people have to wait in to go. These drivers think that there is a line behind the next car is enough of a stop to merit going whenever. Tip: it’s not. Stop signs are meant for stopping, not POTS spelled backwards on a red octagon. Scooters and Segways: I think your life choices are worse than your choices on the road.

These Olympians become a focal point of national pride for many nations, large or small. The Olympics gives people around the world a glimmer of hope and a chance to be proud of their homelands, which is more valuable than we realize in an age of political and economic turmoil. The games give everyone a chance to shine.

I do acknowledge that this article has been check-full of rumors, hunches, and other happy thoughts relating the Olympics to some perfect fantasy world where everyone gets along. It would be naive to think that just because two countries get along at the Olympic games that they can learn to get along otherwise. But, it’s a start: it shows that people are indeed capable of collaboration and mutual support. And the mere presence of that, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is enough to inspire hope in the hearts of many people. Call me an idealist, but hope goes a long way. Many nations have experienced great change motivated by nothing else but a message of hope. This is why the games are still important and relevant in this day in age. It’s about unity. It’s about being the only one who can dance on the best ice or who the best bobsleder is. It’s about hope. It’s about celebrating the world as we know it.
OUR VIEWS

HOT or NOT

Minority leadership

The Black Leadership Conference allowed minority and non-minority students alike to participate in a session that brought several noteworthy speakers to campus. Holding such events on campus reinforces the importance of campus diversity. Hopefully this conference will, as the name insists, lighten minority leadership on campus as it is currently lacking.

Field fire

The evacuation of Fields Dormitory last Thursday forced the displacement of nearly all freshmen honors students. While it is commendable that many of the upperclassmen honored students offered to house the displaced freshmen, it would have been more advantageous if such an incident did not occur in the first place, leaving the freshmen to study in peace.

Netting wins

The early season success of men's lacrosse is a wonderful reminder that non-scholarship athletes at Tech also represent Tech in a positive way. That being said, the Jackets to a 4-0 conference will, as the name suggests, enhance minority leadership on campus as it is currently lacking.

Funds fiasco

The news coming out of the audit JFC that a Tech student attempted to get funds for a club that the student was not even a part of in order to pocket the money raises many eyebrows as to the oversight of the money SGA dispenses. While this appears to be an isolated incident, this potentially five-figure fiasco should not be taken lightly and any potential legal remedies should be sought.

Long, strenuous budget process needed to ensure transparency

Six-figure discussions, percentage cut suggestions, thousands of line items, excel worksheet navigation challenges and the scramble to ensure all the paperwork is done on time (and correctly of course) can only mean one thing: it's budget season.

Hopefully you've been keeping up on the state of the institutions finances, but if you haven't, all you need to know is the economy sucks—although it's getting better. Our student fees have been raised to combat shortfalls and support our beloved institution as it continues to grow and prosper. Fortunately, as students, we have a right to a portion of the fees imposed on us ($818 per semester Student Activity Fee or SAF), and thus, the privilege to distribute the revenue from the SAF, about $4.3 million, in SGA legislative bills and through annual budgets.

SAF is very often known for its lengthy Tuesday meetings. The lesser known portion of SGA finances—although it is the portion through which a large majority of the funding is allocated—is the budget process. Every year, budget hearings are the line item budget in October; budgets are then reviewed through the Joint Finance Committee in conjunction with student organizations and recommended to both the Graduate Student Senate and Undergraduate House of Representatives in March. After much discussion, these bodies will pass the final budget for the following fiscal year (in this case FY11) in April.

I have been fortunate enough to serve as the Joint Finance Committee Chairman for SGA and have worked with my committee, and the talented SGA accountant, to guarantee a positive SGA budget season. The budget process is always surrounded by a good deal of controversy; my primary goal going into this year was to make rational, business decisions in allocating funding. Transparency throughout the entire process is key.

For those unfamiliar with the Tier system, it is a method of grouping various campus organizations. Tier I is the CRC and Student Center. They have first priority to the Student Activity Fee. Tier II are organizations like Student Publications, WREK, IFC—basically organizations that impact large numbers of students. Tier III organizations consist mostly of the culture clubs.

Over winter break, a schedule was set out to all the organizations through the Student Involvement Office concerning when budget hearings with the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) would take place. Unfortunately, due to organizations experiencing officer turnover at the end of the fall, some organizations never knew that the meetings were taking place. Keeping this in mind, we are being forgiving this year, but there is potential that next year organizations will receive penalties for not appearing at budget meetings. So as an officer of your organization now, make it a priority to make that officer transition as smooth as possible at the end of the fall.

Matthew Cauble
SGA Vice President of Finance

HOT

Technique

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Can you lose your salvation?

This is a loaded question; it assumes salvation takes a person from burning in hell to dwelling in heaven. The term “saved” along with “lost” (Matt 10:7) and “condemnation” (Rom 8:11) have been misunderstood to deal with going to heaven or hell. Jesus never taught doctrine which dealt with heaven or hell. In fact, the Apostle Paul never mentioned the word hell in any of his epistles. Jesus came to establish a kingdom in which he would reign over Israel on the throne of His father, David (2 Sam 7:12-15). Luke 1:32). So Jesus begins his ministry performing miracles and preaching “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” calling Israel to her role as priests (representatives before God—Exodus) to the Gentiles. However, Israel did not accept Christ as her king and Messiah, and in Matthew 11, Jesus changes his message. “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt 11:28). This rest does not refer to going to heaven but to resting from the demands of the Law of Moses. Thus when Paul says Christ came to “save sinners” (1 Tim 1:15), he came to give them rest from the “condemnation” (2 Cor 3:7-9)—or judgment—which the law impounds on believers. Jesus removes this condemnation at the cross for all who will accept him (Rom 8:1) by changing them from sinners to saints, who are now dead to the law (Gal, 2:19, Rom 6:7). Understanding the kingdom concept and the fact that salvation refers to deliverance from the law, this question poses no damming ramifications and is therefore “moot.”

All that being said, one must acknowledge they are a sinner and their inadequacy to adjust the problem (Luke 15:9-14). It’s only after that step that one can accept Jesus and be “saved.”

Which brings us to next week’s question: What is the unforgivable sin?

Questions or comments? Write to: Justin.b.waecht@gmail.com, Russell.hallman@gmail.com

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Strong Meat

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